

Silver Banner

Summer 2009

Issue 68

Editor: Susan Jacobs

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Hilltown Assoc. of Councils on Aging is to provide and promote programs, activities and services to the senior citizens of the hill town communities of Becket, Dalton, and Peru.

Inside this issue:

Hilltown Notes from Becket	2
News from Dalton	3
Chuckle Time	4
Dalton Travelers	5
Health Tips	6
Pet First Aid	6
News from Elder Services	7
Know the Signs	7

Laughter—The Best Medicine

We are born with the gift of laughter. Laughter is a natural medicine which can lift our spirits. Laughter is contagious. How many of us, when we hear a baby or child laughing can keep from responding with our own smiles and chuckles—and even belly laughs.

Medical research studies have shown that the benefits of laughter are similar to exercise: it's good for your cardiovascular system, lowers blood pressure and decreases your resting heart rate. It's also a powerful antidote for pain as shown in the following:

A minister had been in a serious accident and had to spend several weeks in the hospital. He had a lot of pain, and was given shots to reduce it. The procedure was always the same: when the pain got bad enough, he would ring a

buzzer near his bed and a nurse would soon come to give him the shot. One day, he rang for the nurse and then rolled over on his side (with his back to the door), pulled his hospital gown up over his exposed backside, and waited for the nurse to come in. When he heard the door open, he pointed to his right bare buttock and said, "Why don't you give me the shot right here this time?"

After a few moments of silence, he looked up. It was a woman from his church! The minister, realizing what he had done, started laughing. He laughed so hard that tears were coming out of his eyes when the nurse arrived.

When he tried to explain what had happened, he began laughing even harder.

(Continued on pg. 4)



NEW SCAM WARNINGS... I get regular information from Elder Affairs with alerts. The most recent warned of a wave of SPAM emails that include the word, "Tagged" in the subject line that has been circulating. These emails appear to come from 'trusted' sources such as family, friends and work colleagues. In reality, the SPAM self-propagates via the address book or contact list of a recipient who opens and reads the spam message. **So, what can you do?**

First, be cautious about all communications you receive—even from "friends and acquaintances." Think before you click.

Don't open any attachment unless you were expecting it and know whom it's from.

(Continued page 5)

HILLTOWN NOTES

Becket News (by Joan Moylan) Over the winter, we lost another wonderful gentleman, Walter Monette who was also in his 90's. He had worked in the kitchen for many years and greeted each person he served with a big smile. We are all going to miss him.

April was very busy, starting off with Michael Flak and George Fuller, the two candidates for Selectman come to speak to our group. They each told us a little about themselves and how they would like to improve our town of Becket. George Fuller, who was born and raised in this great town was the winner.



I attended a meeting (representing the town's seniors) with our Town Manager, first selectman, one representative from each area of town. A

committee was formed to determine the best ways to fill the gaps discovered in the December storm emergency. The committee is looking to find ways of handing communication so that the towns people, and especially the senior population will be kept informed. Another one or two seniors are needed to serve on this committee. The next meeting is in June, so if you are interested in helping, please contact me or the Selectmen.

In May, the YMCA (Chimney Corners Girl's Camp) sent a representative to talk with us about the girls doing some community service with the seniors. They have also invited us to have our monthly pot luck at the camp with them providing the food. We will be going to the Boy's Camp for two pot lucks in July and August. Shaz Atwell, the boy's dining hall director will also be providing food for the seniors on a regular basis. They have been doing this for the past three years and the seniors love it.



A photo contest was held in May. Each person was asked to bring in a picture of themselves when they were young (small child

to young adult age). I posted and numbered each picture on a display board and gave everyone a couple of days to study them, and then challenged them to name as many people as they could. This has generated more fun and conversation among our lunch group than almost any other program.

In June: Hearing Clinic on the 10th.

On the 16th, Becket seniors will be the guests of the Hilltown Seniors in Russell at a picnic.

On June 24th, we are all heading to Essex, CT for lunch at Dick & Dine in Saybrook followed by a ride on the Essex Steam Train through some historical sites. After this, all will board the Thatcher Paddle Boat for a tour on the CT River.

In July, we will be reciprocating and inviting the Hilltown Seniors to our annual Picnic. Guest speaker will be our new Town Manager who is starting on July 1st. It will be a sad day when we have to say goodbye to Richard Furlong, our present town manager. Richard has been an active part of our seniors, and has always had an open door policy with us.



Plans for August are in the making, so contact me or Sonny at the Becket Town Hall on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 623-8934.

Hilltown Assoc. of Councils on Aging, Inc. Membership Meeting June 29, 2009, 1 PM Becket Town Hall

A meeting of the representatives of the member towns of the Hilltown Assoc. of COA's, Inc. will be held on June 29, 2009 at 1 PM at the Becket Town Hall. Joan Moylan, Director of the Becket COA will offer a tour of the newly redecorated COA rooms.

NEWS FROM DALTON



On Saturday, May 23rd, under the direction of Thomas Balardini III, a group of Scouts, family and community members (including Dalton Fire Dept. volunteers)

leveled and cleaned the benches along Main Street as part of Thomas' Eagle Scout project. Many people use the benches as resting places as they walk along our beautiful downtown.

Another part of his project includes the research and placement of an additional bench in the area of East Main St., East St. and Old Windsor Road which will be completed over the summer.

The "Keep Dalton Walking" project was begun in 2005 by COA board member, Naomi Rauff. To date, ten benches have been installed along our main street. A member of the board since 2004, Naomi recently resigned to focus on other projects. We have told her that the benches will serve as a lasting testament to the love and commitment she has for Dalton.

The project has now been taken up by board member, Maureen Mitchell who has begun working with the Friends of the COA on plans for additional benches in town. Please pass on your suggestions for future bench locations.

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On May 19th, the Dalton COA and Friends of the DCOA held their annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner in the St. Agnes' Parish Hall. This year, the two local Food Banks were chosen to receive special acknowledgement of their efforts to serve our community.

The **St. Agnes Food Pantry** has been in operation since the summer of 2000, and is open every Thursday from 6-6:30 PM. It is located in the former convent next to the church and serves any family in the CBRSD, anonymously and without any income eligibility requirements. All are allowed one bag per household and can pack their own with what they can use. The shelves are stocked with food do-

nated primarily by St. Agnes' parishioners with additional food donations from the two Letter Carrier food drives, Boy Scout food drive, Church of the Nazarene and a cereal "challenge" from the youth at the Congregational Church.

Each year, the Pantry provides a complete Thanksgiving meal to those in need. Last year, 38 baskets were given out with all the turkeys donated by the parishioners.

For information, please contact the St. Agnes Rectory.

The program at the **Dalton United Methodist Church** (corner of Main St. & North St.) was also recognized.

"The Scarlet Cord" opened in December, 2007, and is a free clothing store available to everyone. It is located downstairs in the church and serves about 20 families per week. There is a wide variety of clothing and shoes—all in good condition—for every member of the family. All donations come through the churches in town and members of the community. The Scarlet Cord is open on Tuesday afternoons from 2 to 5 pm, and on Thursdays from 9:30 am until noon. All are welcome.

"Loaves & Fish" food pantry opened in March, 2008. Twenty to thirty-five families are served each week. Each is provided with cereal, pasta, peanut butter, tuna, soup, canned vegetables, canned fruit and fresh vegetables when available. Loaves & Fish is supported by donations from individuals, churches and organizations (like the Lions Club and Civitan) and also depends heavily on food drives from the Boy Scouts and the Postal workers. Berkshire Organics donates produce each week. Loaves & Fish pantry is open on Tuesday evenings from 3 to 5 pm.

The Dalton United Methodist Church is also the local partner with the Berkshire Humane Society, offering a "Pet Food Pantry" for pet owners facing hard times. For information, please call the church at 684-0521.

*(Continued from pg. 1)* When he was finally able to tell the nurse the whole story, what do you think he noticed? His pain was gone! He didn't need the shot, and didn't ask for one for another 90 minutes!

Voltaire recognized long ago that humor and laughter are good for you, writing, "The art of medicine consists of keeping the patient amused while nature heals the disease." You've probably noticed yourself that you simply feel better after a good belly laugh. New evidence confirms that your sense of humor not only enriches life, it also promotes physical, mental and spiritual health.

Humor also improves communication. Victor Borge said, "Laughter is the shortest distance between two people." Part of the value of humor lies in its ability to open the channels of communication. Many speakers start their presentation with a joke or funny story to "warm up the audience."

Locally, Jim Rivers and Jack Cooney are masters of the short story! Jim told me about an anniversary trip he and Catherine took to NY City. Standing outside one of the TV studios where they were doing the early morning show, Jim was approached by one of the on-air people and asked what their secret was to a long marriage. "A million laughs!" was Jim's reply. Laughter help to strengthen relationships and can attract others to us.

One essential characteristic that helps us laugh is to not take ourselves too seriously. Try these ways to help yourself see the lighter side of life:

- Laugh at yourself! If you make a mistake in front of others, don't get embarrassed and uncomfortable; it will just make everyone else feel the same way, but if you laugh at yourself, others will relax and join in the laughter.
- Look for the humor in a bad situation. There is lots of irony and absurdity in life. This will help improve your mood and the mood of those around you.
- Surround yourself with reminders to lighten up. Keep some toys around—not just for your grandkids, but for yourself too. Keep photos of your family having fun!
- Keep things in perspective. Many things in life are beyond our control, particularly the behavior of other people.
- Deal with your stress. Stress is the biggest roadblock to humor and laughter.
- Pay attention to children and emulate them. They are the experts on playing, taking life lightly and laughing.

SO, LIGHTEN UP! The ability to laugh, plan and have fun with others makes life more enjoyable—and is good for your health!

*Sue*

## **CHUCKLE TIME.....**

Jenny's great Aunt Harriet, a widow, had been dating an elderly widower for about five years. The man finally decided to ask her to marry him. She immediately said, "Yes." The next morning when he awoke, the man couldn't remember what her answer was! "Was she happy? I think so.... Wait, no.... She looked at me funny....." After about an hour of trying to remember to no avail, he got on the telephone and gave her a call. Embarrassed, he admitted that he didn't remember her answer to his marriage proposal. "Oh," Harriet said. "I'm so glad you called. I remembered saying 'yes' to someone, but I couldn't remember who it was."

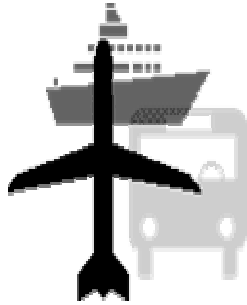
*An optimist is a person who is happy over the savings on gas when the car won't start.*

*Remember when health foods were whatever your mother said you'd better eat—or else....?*

*Life is easier than you think. All you have to do is: Accept the impossible; Do without the indispensable; Bear the intolerable, and... Be able to smile at anything!*

## News from Dalton Travelers from Jim & Catherine Rivers

Catherine and I have been coordinators for the Dalton Travelers for six years now, and believe it is time to pass the 'keys' on to new hands. It has been a wonderful ride—one which has given not only us a lot of pleasure, but we believe, also those who have traveled with us.



So, if you like to travel, are organized and like people, we encourage you to call us at 684-0357. We will do our best to answer your

questions and to share our enthusiasm for this program. Please don't wait to be asked; if you want to know more, please call.

[Note from Sue: This is a perfect volunteer opportunity for two or three friends and couples to do together. Please call Jim or me for more information.]

***Shades of Ireland*** - If you've never been to Ireland, this is a wonderful opportunity to visit the Emerald Isle. There are just two openings left on this trip scheduled for Sept. 20-29.

### **Scam Warnings** (Continued from page 1)

If you weren't expecting an email attachment, contact that person before opening the email.

If it appears to be a SPAM communication, do not respond. Delete it.

Do not click on any questionable links in an email message—instead, use an Internet search engine to research the link to determine its validity.

If you need to send an email attachment to someone, let them know in advance that you'll be sending it.

Use an Internet search engine to research the subject line of a suspicious email to determine if it is a known SPAM message.

Install a SPAM/phishing filter on your email application and also on your web browser. These filters will not keep out all SPAM messages, but will reduce the numbers of SPAM messages you actually receive.

Ensure that your computer is up-to-date on all patches.

Ensure that your antivirus program is installed and up-to-date.



## **TRIAD SAFETY FAIR** **July 15, 2009**

Dalton Triad will host the ninth annual county-wide Triad Safety Fair on the grounds of the Dalton VFW on Housatonic Street. The event will begin at 10 AM to end at 2 PM.

A number of exhibitors have confirmed their participation including the Berkshire County District Attorney, Berkshire County Sheriff's Office, Elder Services of Berkshire County, Inc., Western Mass. Legal Services, Berkshire Health Systems Community Outreach Van and Berkshire VNA. Additional organizations have been invited but have not yet confirmed.

Triad groups from around the county will be attending. Currently in addition to Dalton, there are Triad groups in Hinsdale/Washington, North Adams, Lenox, Pittsfield and Alford/Great Barrington/Egremont.

Triad was begun nationally in 1988, and works to improve the quality of life for seniors. By providing an opportunity for the exchange of information between law enforcement and older residents, Triad can help reduce criminal victimization of the elderly.

Dalton Triad meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 1 PM at the Dalton VFW. For information, call 684-2000.

## HEALTH TIPS.....

**Breathe easier during allergy season....** (From American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology)

Reduce the sneezing, watery eyes and runny nose of allergies caused by grass and tree pollen with these simple steps:

- + **Wash your hands frequently.** Pollen is everywhere. You get it on your hands opening a car door, running your hands through your hair, or touching outdoor surfaces.
- + **Wash your hair before you go to bed at night** if you've spent a lot of time outside.
- + **Close your windows and use the air conditioner** to keep pollen from drifting into your home—and car.
- + **If possible, stay indoors between 5 and 10 AM**, the peak pollen hours.
- + **Check the pollen count** and try to stay indoors on days when it is high.
- + **Avoid mowing lawns**, which stirs up pollens.
- + **Use a dryer for laundry** instead of hanging it outdoors.
- + **Talk to your doctor** about over-the-counter or prescription remedies.

**FOR CAREGIVERS** (From CURE Cancer Resource Guide)

People undergoing treatment for cancer were asked what they would like their loved ones to know. Here are some of their suggestions:

- + **It's OK** to still get mad at me for not doing the dishes or forgetting to pay bills for do other things.
- + **Sometimes** your positive energy has to be enough for both of us.
- + **Respect** my independence and self-esteem. It's hard to accept the fact that I need to be cared for, so let me do as much for myself as possible.
- + **Touch** me.
- + **If you think** I'm overexerting myself, check with my doctor before trying to stop me from living as normally as I can.
- + **Forgive** me if my fear of the unknown leads me to be difficult or unkind.
- + **Be honest** and remember to laugh and to cry with me.
- + **You have a right** to set limits on what you can do for me.

### Dog First Aid and Cat First Aid

Created for conscientious pet owners, two volumes from the American Red Cross Safety Series—*Dog First Aid* and *Cat First Aid* build first aid skills and provide guidance in emergency situations until veterinary care is available. Both manuals are bundled with a DVD in the back cover that demonstrates how to perform many of the first aid steps described in these books.

Developed by the nation's pre-eminent safety training organization in consultation with top experts, pet owners will receive accurate information from a known, trusted source.

The guide includes information on:

- +Symptoms and care for common ailments and emergencies
- +Creating a pet first aid kit
- +How to prepare for disasters
- +Basic pet owner responsibilities like spaying, neutering and administering medications
- +Maintaining your pet's health and well-being

Plus, *Dog First Aid* and *Cat First Aid* comes with a DVD that demonstrates to the user—set-by-step—how to manage a variety of urgent care situations, including car accidents, wounds, electrical shock, and eye, foot and ear injuries. Visit [www.redcross.org/store](http://www.redcross.org/store) for this and many other safety related products, or contact your local Red Cross chapter.



## ELDER SERVICES - Adult Family Care

Elder Services **Adult Family Care** program provides individualized care in a home environment where the participant becomes a valued and productive member of a host family, which receives a tax-free stipend. **Family members, with the exception of a spouse or legal guardian, are considered eligible caregivers.**

Elder Services offers monthly supportive visits from a Registered Nurse and a social worker. Each participant has the option of attending an Adult Day Health program in his or her community.

To be eligible for the program, an individual must be age 60 or over or age 18 to 59

with a chronic disability; be community MassHealth eligible, have a medical condition that requires daily assistance and/or supervision with activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing or incontinence management, and be willing and appropriate to live in the home of another person

The Adult Family Care Program now offers an enhanced program for individuals with complex needs, which offers more clinical and financial support to participants and their caregivers.

For information, call Elder Services at 413-499-0524 or 1-800-544-5242.

From the Alzheimer's Association

### KNOW the 10 SIGNS

EARLY DETECTION MATTERS

#### 10 warning signs of Alzheimer's Disease

1. Memory changes that disrupt daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks
4. Confusion with time or place
5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
6. New problems with words in speaking or writing
7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
8. Decreased or poor judgment
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities
10. Changes in mood and personality

If you or someone you know experience any of these warning signs, please see a doctor.

For more information, call our 24/7 Helpline at 800-272-3900

Or visit us on-line at [www.alz.org/MANH](http://www.alz.org/MANH)

Phone: 413-684-2000  
Fax: 413-684-4033  
Email: dcoa@bcn.net

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## **PROGRAMS & EVENTS IN DALTON:**

**FOOT CLINICS:** 9-4 at the DALTON CRA on July 27th & 28th. Call the COA to book an appointment. Fee.

**BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC:** Third Thursday at Grace Church,

**OIL PAINTING CLASSES:** Tuesdays, 1-3 PM at Dalton CRA. Fee.

**LUNCHESES:** Mondays and Thursdays at noon, Grace Church Guild Hall with special events held monthly. Make your reservation at least 24 hours ahead.

**"VETERAN OF THE WEEK"**, from the Veteran's History Project shown Saturdays on Channel 16, Warner Cable. [Note: Check out the VHP website at [www.loc.gov/vets](http://www.loc.gov/vets).]

**MAH JONGG**—Fridays from 10:15 AM to 12:30 PM. Come and learn, or organize a table of your experienced friends to play. For information, call 684-2000.

## **"BREAKFAST CLUB"**

Who doesn't like a yummy breakfast with a very social group of people? This popular monthly event is held in the lobby of the CRA and includes a walk (indoors in the bad weather), breakfast and a speaker or other program. Upcoming Friday dates are: June 19th—Speaker, Tom Cooney; July 31st; Aug. 28th; Sept. 25th.

The Program Committee responsible for this and other COA activities meets on the Wednesday before the upcoming Breakfast Club dates. If you would like to be part of this committee, please plan to attend their next meeting. You are all encouraged to call (684-2000) or email ([dcoa@bcn.net](mailto:dcoa@bcn.net)) your program suggestions for the committee to consider.

